

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-16 (canceled)

17. (Original) An automated meter reading system having a plurality of utility meters for measuring and recording metered data, a plurality of nodes, each node communicating with a number of designated meters to read the meter data, a plurality of gateways, each gateway communicating with a number of the nodes to receive the meter data, a data network interfaced to communicate with the plurality of gateways, and a host server interfaced with the data network to receive the meter data read from the gateways, said host server maintaining a topology database comprising:

first electronic data representative of meter assignments to at least one node;

second electronic data electronically keyed to said first electronic data and representative of node assignments to at least one gateway;

third electronic data electronically keyed to the second electronic data for grouping together a plurality of nodes to define groups of noninterfering nodes based at least in part on the node assignments; and

fourth electronic data electronically keyed to the second electronic data for grouping together a plurality of gateways to define sets of noninterfering gateways.